

"Letter from Loretto"

Hello again from the Federal Correctional Institution at Loretto, Pennsylvania. I'm now nearing five months incarceration against a 30-month sentence for blowing the whistle on the CIA's illegal torture program. With good time, I have around 16 months to go.

When you first come to prison, you almost immediately develop a new sense of "normal." What is normal on the outside - a rude clerk at 7-11, a telemarketer calling your home at dinnertime - is no longer my world. My new normal is that the guy I may sit across from in the cafeteria is here for murdering a policeman. Normal is the guy in the next bunk is the former methamphetamine king of Kentucky, and will likely die here. Normal is that nearly 40% of the now 1,325 prisoners at Loretto are pedophiles and child rapists.

The pedophile population is not unique to Loretto. In fact, every low-security prison in America has a large pedophile population. With the proliferation of child pornography on the internet, it is much easier to catch pedophiles in the act of committing their crimes than it has ever been.

Most of the pedophiles here are white; I'll let the sociologists and anthropologists figure that one out. They range in age from the early 20s to the middle 80s. Most of them profess to be very religious. Indeed, church services are normally packed to the

rafters with pedophiles. Almost all of them shout about their innocence, the injustice of their incarceration, and their own victimization.

The first pedophile I came into contact with was a coworker in the library. He told me in our first conversation that he was doing 24 years for "looking at crime scene photos." Of course I asked what he meant by that. His very matter-of-fact response was, "Well, having sex with children is a crime. I was only looking at the photos." There were thousands of them, as it turned out. Videos, too. Some weeks later, lamenting his failure to successfully appeal his conviction, he told me, "What really did me in was that subfolder." "OK," I said. "I'll bite. What was in the subfolder?" "I like to look at pictures of naked dead children, from morgues," he said, adding "I realize now that was wrong." Stunned, my only response was, "You're not the victim." Did I mention that he married a 16-year-old. He's in his 50s.

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I mentioned in a previous letter that I work ^{NOW} in the chapel. This is a highly-sought-after and peaceful job. I like the chapel, and the staff is terrific. The chapel, like the library, is seen as something of a safehaven for pedophiles. They aren't hassled there and they can sit and read for long periods. There is one informal rule in the chapel, however: No talking about your case.

One evening, a particularly loud pedophile was complaining outside the chapel office that he was in the process of suing his

gex
7-10-13
3 of 8

mother, brother, and wife, who had completely disowned him after he was caught having sex with his 15-year-old daughter. ("But she wanted to," he protested. She enjoyed it.") I walked over to him and reminded him that he was not allowed to talk about his case in the chapel. His response left me speechless: "But Jesus loved the little children." I just went back to my seat.

One elderly pedophile in my housing unit was caught on the old NBC television show "To Catch a Predator." He thought he was going to have sex with a 13-year-old. Instead, the cops grabbed him. In the trunk of his car they found handcuffs, a hammer, a bag of lime, and a body bag. You can imagine his intentions.

My own personal philosophy is generally to live and let live. At times, however, this is a challenging credo. About a month ago, a new prisoner arrived. He's in his mid-40s, a wealthy and successful attorney. My first thought was that he was somebody I could hang out with. We had a friendly conversation and I asked him what he was in for. He said it was "complicated," (a red flag) but that he had misused a client's money from an escrow account. I made a mental note to ask around about his circumstances.

A few days later, my wife and three of my five children (my 8-year-old son, 6-year-old daughter, and 18-month-old son) came to visit. We sat in the very first row of chairs, next to the newly-arrived attorney. About 20 minutes into the visit, when my wife and kids had gone to use the vending machines, a corrections

moving

officer (CO) motioned for me to get up. He whispered that he was my family, and the large family of another prisoner, to the opposite end of the room. I told him that we had plenty of room, so if he was trying to give us more space, it wasn't necessary. Well, he said, "I need for you to move. I think there's a problem." He nodded at the newly-arrived attorney, who was visiting with his parents. We moved.

By the end of the week I had gotten the full story. The attorney worked at a law firm in Moscow. A connoisseur of the ballet, he was a regular at performances of the Bolshoi. He went on to become a patron of the Moscow Academy of Ballet, which trained child ballet prodigies for the Bolshoi. At one point, a school administrator asked if he would consider paying the tuition and expenses for a 12-year-old boy who was a true prodigy. The boy came from a poor family outside Moscow and simply could not afford to go to the school. The attorney went to the school to videotape the boy, dancing in his underwear, as Russian ballet students typically do, so that he could get a better idea of the boy's technique. He offered to pay all the boy's expenses, provided the boy live with him in his one-bedroom apartment, ostensibly sleeping on the couch. The reluctant parents agreed.

According to court records, the attorney began orally and orally violating the boy within weeks, as often as four times a week. He told the boy that relationships with girls were "disgusting" and that he would love the boy for "a trillion years." This went on

for years, during which the now moody and depressed boy was sworn to secrecy. At the age of 15, the boy was invited to study at a ballet camp in Philadelphia. He and the attorney traveled there, then on to Boston to another camp, before returning to Moscow.

The boy finally developed a relationship with an American girl whom he said he wanted to marry. He confessed his secret to her and she urged him to hire a lawyer. The boy soon ~~was~~ filed a civil suit against his abuser. As soon as the case was filed, the court reported its contents to the FBI, and the abuser was arrested. He was eventually convicted of two felonies: Traveling in foreign commerce with the intent to engage in sex with a minor between the ages of 12 and 16; and transporting a person in foreign commerce with the intent that such person engage in criminal sexual conduct (the Mann Act.)

I won't bore you with stories of how photos of my cellmate's 5-year-old grandchild were stolen ~~for~~ from his locker or of how some pedophiles subscribe to teen magazines so they can cut out pictures of Selena Gomez and hang them in their lockers.

The purpose of these horrible accounts is not to disgust. Instead, it's to point out several problems, only one of which is unique to Loretto. First, if pedophiles are not permitted within 1000 feet of a school, why are they permitted within 5 feet of my children? Why isn't there a section of the visiting room where pedophiles can have their visits, but that is separated by a partition? It couldn't possibly be expensive and it would serve to protect

gmk
7-10-13
6 of 8

our children. (Of course, if I had been sent to a camp, as was recommended by both the judge and the prosecutor in my case, it would be a different story. Pedophiles are not permitted in camps. Remember, though, that a Bureau of Prisons bureaucrat deemed me a "threat to the public safety.")

Second, despite what you may have read over the years, there is no such thing as "treatment" or "rehabilitation" in prison. It just doesn't exist. There's no counseling or medication for pedophiles. Once their sentences have been served, they're free to leave and to live in society again. Sure, they'll have years and years of probation, but that won't do anything to curb their urges. It's a proven fact that many of them will re-offend.

Finally, since I got here I've come to realize how little the federal government does to protect our children from predators. Perhaps it's time to consider the issue of civil confinement. That is where the government moves a pedophile to a secure location on the prison grounds after he has completed his sentence. He is not necessarily subject to "counts" or "10-minute moves" like everybody else in prison, but he is not free to reenter society and to re-offend. This system works in Virginia and in other states, and it helps greatly to protect our children.

Thank you for the hundreds of letters of support and encouragement since my last letter. They've really kept my spirits up. To learn more about my case, please visit

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www.defendjohnk.com.

All the best,

John

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7-10-13

8 of 8

★ Before my arrest, I was an adjunct professor of Intelligence Studies at a university in Virginia, a job to which I expect to return. After having the above conversation, I asked a senior professor, a good friend, for his advice on how to deal with this pedophile. My friend, in turn, consulted the chairman of the university's Psychology Department. The psychology professor said it was her opinion that pedophiles talk about their cases and relate these stories because it gives them sexual gratification to relive their crimes. She recommended that I end all contact with the pedophile, which I've done.